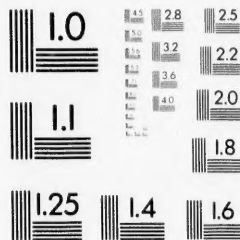


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21 mai 1868

PASTORAL LETTER

OF THE

**Fathers of the Third Provincial Council of
Quebec, etc.**



We, by the mercy of God and the Grace of the Holy Apostolic See, the
Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of Quebec, &c., &c.

*To all Ecclesiastics and Religious Communities of both sexes, and to all
the Faithful of the said Province, Health and Benediction
in our Lord.*

In closing the labours of our third Provincial Council, most Beloved Brethren,
we deem it necessary to write to you this Pastoral Letter, to express to you,
with one common accord, the lively solicitude, with which, during this Synod,
we have been concerned for your eternal welfare: *charissimi omnem sollicitu-
dinem faciens scribere vobis de communi vestra salute, necesse habui scribere
vobis* (Jud. 3).

Assembled in the Metropolitan City from the various parts of this vast
Province, as were the Apostles at Jerusalem, and secluded in the retirement of
the Council, as they were in the Cœnaculum, we maturely considered what we
ought to do, we who are their legitimate successors, in order to preserve the
sacred deposit of the Faith, which they have left us for an inheritance. Therefore,
we have judged that in these evil days, when the wicked man is sowing tares
profusely in the field of the Father of the family, it is our duty to raise our
voices together, to conjure you to keep a strict watch over this precious treasure:
Deprecans supercertari semel traditæ sanctis fidei. (Jud. 3).

We do it with so much the more confidence that we have assisted in spirit, with the holy Apostles, at the glorious triumph of the Ascension of Our Lord; that we have seen, as they did, the author and the perfecter of our Faith ascend in Majesty to the Highest Heavens; that we have received, as they did, the solemn Blessing which He gave to the Earth, when a luminous cloud concealed Him from the wondering looks of His beloved disciples; that we have withdrawn, as they did, at the word of the Angels, from the holy Mount of Olives, and shut ourselves up in this new Cenaculum, a tabernacle illuminated by a celestial splendor and embalmed with the most delicious perfume, for we have found here the Queen of the Apostles, to whom, in this beautiful month of May, you cease not to express, in unison with all the Faithful of the universe, the sentiments of your filial love for that tender mother.

You were in spirit, with us, Beloved Brethren, in the sacred place where your first pastors were assembled; and it is, without a doubt, to the fervor of your prayers that we are indebted for the light we have received, which enables us to discern clearly the dangers that threaten our beloved flock, and to provide more efficaciously for their wants. Now, one of the greatest dangers which we deem it our duty to point out to you, is the presence in our midst of impious men who, by a terrible Decree of the Divine Justice, are abandoned in this world, to the wanderings of their own minds, and to the corruption of their hearts, to be cast, alas! into everlasting flames in the next, should they not become converted; since the Apostle St. Jude assures us, that they change the Grace of our God into uncleanness, and renounce Jesus Christ, our sole Lord and Master. *Subintroierunt enim quidam homines (qui olim præscripti sunt in hoc iudicium) impii, Dei nostri gratiam transferentes in luxuriam, et solum dominatorem Jesum Christum negantes* (Jud. 4).

You have, therefore, Beloved Brethren, the most pressing motives for opening your hearts to the divine favors, which are offered to you, in these days of salvation, by the Father of Mercies; and we exhort you this day, in the fullness of the Charity that animates us for you, to close your hearts against those who would rob you of the inestimable treasure of the Faith. Now, we may say to you with St. Augustin, your hearts are prepared, because the Enemy has been driven out of them: *Parata sunt corda vestra, quia exclusus est inimicus de cordibus vestris* (S. Aug. de Symb. ad Cath.) We must in the first place make known to you, Beloved Brethren, the men who, in these evil days, have a design upon your Faith; and, for this purpose, we need only repeat to you the well known words of our immortal Pontiff, Pius IX, who says to us all,

that these terrible enemies are the men who, *armed with the assistance of the Secret Societies, would abolish all religious worship; who trample under their feet the Sacred Rights of the Church, by endeavouring to have an unjust mastery over her, who exalt human reason as much as they can, even to raising it to a level with Divine Revelation; who think that we must hope for the salvation of all men, even of those who do not live in the bosom of the Church of Jesus Christ, out of which, nevertheless, it is impossible to be saved, (Allocution of the 9th December, 1854); who have the temerity to deny every truth, every law, every authority and every right of Divine origin; who fear not to publish, with the vice of deceiving men, that the Roman Pontiff and all the Sacred Ministers of the Church must be excluded from every right and every control over temporalities. (Allocution of the 9th, June, 1862.)*

These fatal errors, and many others equally prejudicial, are propagated over the whole world, in a manner truly alarming, as well by means of bad books and irreligious newspapers, as by impious discourses delivered from the rostrums and the pulpits of pestilential doctrines. What we have still more to deplore, is that they seduce and infect even religious minds, who are not on their guard; for the men who proclaim them, take great pains to hide their dark designs under the outward appearance of religion which they make a pretence of respecting, in order the more surely to deceive the simple minded.

These are the ensnaring errors, which the supreme chief of Pastors has not ceased to point out to the whole world, for the last ten years, in order that the true children of the Church may not be exposed to the danger of falling into them. We are, thus only acting in conformity with the wish of the Vicar of J. C. by calling your attention, this day, to so important a subject, and by deciding that the pontifical allocutions, containing salutary warnings, shall be published in connection with the Decrees of our present Council. You will, therefore, listen with a filial docility, Beloved Brethren, to these paternal counsels, when they are explained to you by your Pastors, with the zeal with which you know them to be imbued, and of which they give you proof, each time that it behoves them to provide for the wants of your souls.

Having made known to you, Beloved Brethren, those you are to fear as the enemies of your Faith, we must now tell you where the dangers you have to avoid are to be found, and what are the snares laid for you by those wicked men. For in these days, more than ever, the powers of Hell make use of every means to ruin utterly, if that were possible, the true religion; and the tempests that arise against her, on the stormy sea of this world, are becoming more and more furious.

These dangers are to be found, doubt it not, Beloved Brethren, in the reading of bad books and bad journals, especially, which are circulated more than ever through the world. For, alas! they are hawked about every where, in public places, in railroad stations and carriages; in the gaols and in the hospitals; in the market places and in private houses. Error disguises itself under every form, and, in order to disseminate its poison more effectually, it is hidden in an infinite number of false bibles, of small tracts full of falsehoods, of irreligious and immoral pamphlets, and of newspapers injurious both to faith and morals. In truth, we have arrived at the evil days foretold by the apostle St. John, when the locusts, which devour all things, come forth from the depths of the abyss in such vast numbers, that they form a dark cloud, which obscures the light of the sun (Encyclical letter of Gregory XVI, 15 August, 1832).

At the sight of so many criminal works, which Hell unceasingly vomits forth on the earth, tremble, Beloved Brethren, as you would on seeing venomous serpents gliding into your houses; *Quasi à facie colubri fuge peccatum*. Drive them far from your dwellings, so that your spirit and your hearts, as well as those of your children, may not be tainted by the poison they contain, which is a thousand times more pernicious to the soul than the pestiferous breath of the serpent to the body. On the contrary, keep in your homes none but approved books, calculated to foster in your families the love of good principles and sound doctrines.

Similar dangers are, also, to be found in frequenting schools, academics, faculties of law and medicine, universities and other institutions of a like kind, where catholic principles are laid aside, if they are not openly controverted; and where, consequently, the faith of the students is imperiled. It is, then your duty, christian parents, to take such measures as will prevent your children from ever becoming attached to these institutions. It also concerns the honor of our Holy Religion, which would be humbled by the preference given to them over the many establishments it unceasingly raises to the glory of God, in the interest of your families, and to the honor of our country.

The danger to your children would be particularly imminent, were you to place them in certain institutions, which, it is well known, have been established solely for the perversion of catholics. The pretended charity that opens to them those asylums, and where they are fed, clothed, and taught gratuitously, has no other object than that of robbing them of the precious gift of Faith. To what dreadful judgments would not parents expose themselves, who would be guilty of sending their children to such institutions, and of thus

forgetting their duty towards those whose eternal salvation ought to be so dear to them.

Very great dangers are also to be met with in mixed marriages ; that is to say, in marriages contracted between persons professing the catholic religion and others, who belong to any of the protestant sects. As to the deplorable evils that arise from such alliances, we can only express to you, Beloved Brethren, how deeply we lament them ; it would be useless to enumerate them, since they are already but too well known to you. Apart from the pain they give the Church, how cruel and how deep are the anxieties they occasion to catholic parents, at the sight of their tender offspring brought up in error and exposed to be lost for all eternity ! How overwhelming the thought, for those who have Faith, that at their death they will have to bid, it may be, an eternal farewell to a cherished spouse, to most beloved children, entangled in the ways of perdition.

Having, thus, Beloved Brethren, placed you on your guard against the principal dangers that beset your Faith, in these wretched days, we must, moreover, forewarn you against certain scandals that are calculated to arrest you in the accomplishment of the rigorous duties which christian morality imposes upon you. For we are not permitted to doubt of it : the violation of the commandments of God, is calculated to weaken in us, and even utterly to destroy, the principle of Faith, which is a principle of Life. Here, then, are the most fatal evils to which we believe it our duty to draw your serious attention, now that being assembled in Council, and for that purpose receiving more enlightenment from the Holy Ghost, who governs the church, we are better enabled to discern the misfortunes which threaten our beloved flock.

The first of these evils, and the most to be dreaded, because as the Apostle says, *it is the root of all crimes*, is covetousness or an insatiable and inordinate thirst for the goods of this world. Indeed, Beloved Brethren, if you reflect on it, you cannot fail to see, that it is this unhappy passion which afflicts the whole world with a deluge of most crying acts of injustice ; that it has invaded all ranks of Society ; that it insinuates itself into a vast multitude of transactions, and gives rise to numberless evils. It is covetousness, above all, that engenders that hideous sore of our age, Usury. Now, is it not Usury that causes men to perpetrate every species of fraud, in order to extort an exorbitant rate of interest, that invents the most iniquitous means of making a fortune without labor, in the shortest possible time ; that, without pity, ruins the widow and the orphan, who become the helpless victims of its rapacity ; that expropriates so many unfortun-

nate borrowers, who are forced to have recourse to the Usurer ; and that obliges so many families to wander in a strange land ? Is it not Usury that desolates the most flourishing Empires and covers the world with ruins ? Usury, beyond a doubt, has always been the most dreadful canker that ever preyed upon the vitals of communities.

In order that you may not deceive yourselves, Beloved Brethren, in so delicate a matter, and that you may have nothing to reproach yourselves with, when you shall be compelled to appear before the Just Judge, listen to the Church, which is charged with teaching you true morality, as well as true Faith. Consult the directors of your conscience and your Pastors, who have the grace and authority to explain to you the law of God and the Rules of the Church. Take pity on the poor man, who is reduced to the hard necessity of borrowing, and have a care not to ruin him, under the pretext of rendering him a service. Let those, on the other hand, who are compelled to borrow, not expose themselves to the fatal consequences which result from loans made at an immoderate rate of interest ; and to this end, let them incur no expenses beyond their means ; and, as far as possible, let them avoid buying on credit.

The second evil that you have to strive against, Beloved Brethren, is Luxury or extravagance, of which the ravages are visible and the evils incalculable ; and, in fact, if we trace its progress, it is easy to find that Luxury is produced and fed by pride, the first, as well as the greatest, of all sins ; that it hurries its votaries into excessive and, consequently, ruinous expenditure ; that it introduces, daily, expensive fashions, often contrary to decency ; that it causes revolting acts of injustice, by inducing its followers to contract debts, which their small means can never enable them to pay ; that it seduces into evil ways many young persons, who are ready to despise the most sacred duties, in order to satisfy their love of dress ; in fine, it withers the heart, and causes the loss of that spirit of faith and piety, without which no real virtue can exist.

These considerations, and many others, which it would take too long to enumerate, cannot fail to inspire you with a great horror of luxury. You will then retrench from the furniture of your houses every superfluous article and every object of vanity ; you will rear your children in that outward simplicity, which is ever the image and natural expression of the innocence of the heart ; and if, as it is desirable you should, you confide your daughters to the care of our good nuns devoted to the instruction of youth, you will second, by every means in your power, their anxious efforts to inspire them with a love of christian modesty, an aversion for the vanities of the world, and a taste for labour and the spirit of economy.

The Church, with a view of encouraging our Religious Ladies to educate your daughters thus carefully, in all respects, has lately given them for a model and Patroness St. Angela of Merici, Foundress of the Ursulines, so honorably known throughout the world; in which, following the example set them by their mother, *they teach young girls, rich and poor, the first elements of their faith; how to live with regularity and chastity; and they train them to those labours that are befitting their sex.* (Decree of the Holy See, dated 11 July, 1861).

This, Beloved Brethren, is the kind of education which you must endeavour to secure for your children: by so doing you will rear up for your Country virtuous families, destined to inherit from generation to generation, the blessings promised to the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose Patriarchal manners you shall have imitated.

The third evil you have to dread, is the love of the pleasures of the world. By these, we mean theatrical performances, shows, comedies, and operas, where the laws of modesty are trampled under foot; and those dances, revolting to pure minds, which are but too freely indulged in at balls and other wordly assemblies. It is impossible for you to share in these profane amusements, without exposing yourselves to the proximate occasion of sin; for every thing in them is calculated to produce an evil impression, to give scandal, and to sully purity and innocence.

You will, therefore, make it a rule to refrain from them yourselves, and to forbid them to your children, if you are sincerely desirous that they should preserve their virtue. Be not surprised when Confessors, who are responsible before God for your souls, exhibit severity, in the tribunal of penitence, towards those who refuse to submit to their injunctions, on a point so highly important as this.

Nevertheless, Beloved Brethren, you must not infer, that it is our intention to deprive you of every kind of amusement and to prohibit the frequenting of all kinds of social meetings. This is far from being our wish; for we know that the law of God permits you to rejoice, to enjoy innocent recreation, and to afford your children the opportunity of attending certain social meetings, certain evening parties, where every thing is conducted in accordance with the rules of good breeding, and where the wise precautions prescribed by christian prudence are carefully observed.

In fine, there is a last evil, which we would fain exhibit to you in all its repulsiveness: It is the evil of Drunkenness, which has reappeared in our Towns and in our Rural Districts, more triumphant than ever, and which brings along with it the most frightful evils. These evils are manifest at all times, but more especially during elections, which, by reason of their frequent

occurrence, constitute one of the principal causes of the demoralization now spreading itself in every direction to an alarming extent.

In order to put a stop to so grave a calamity, we deem it our duty to trace out for you the following rule of conduct, which, in fact, is simply confirming the recommendations made you in the Pastoral Letter of the Fathers of the second Provincial Council of Quebec, dated the 4th July, 1854.

1°. Stand courageously by the engagements you entered into, on becoming members of the Society of the Cross, or Temperance Society ; and renew those sacred engagements daily, by reciting five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys.

2°. Do not frequent Taverns ; and, if, when travelling, you are compelled to resort to houses of the kind, be careful to select such as are conducted in an orderly manner ; but never resort to Taverns in which intoxicating liquors are sold without a licence.

3°. In order to guard against the inroads of drunkenness, be careful to have, in your respective localities, no more than the number of taverns necessary for travellers ; and see that the tavern keepers are duly qualified, and that they maintain proper order in their houses.

You hold in your own hands, Beloved Brethren, the simplest and the easiest means of remedying all these evils, and a host of others, by which our once happy country is now made desolate ; it consists in always making proper elections, that is to say, in sending to represent you in Parliament, none but men who are disposed to put down vice and encourage morality ; in selecting for mayors and for councillors of your municipalities only such of your fellow citizens as you know to be capable of maintaining good order. Hence, you must ever proceed in such elections under a sense of the grave responsibility that lies on your consciences, since you shall have to answer for all the evil done by the men whom you will have elected, while knowing them to be incapable of fully discharging the duties of their position.

When, therefore, you are called upon, Beloved Brethren, to exercise the rights of political life, do not forget that you must answer for your conduct before God, should you fail to act with a proper care in the discharge of the duties attaching thereunto and for the serious consequences that may result from your negligence. If, as we are not permitted to doubt, we must all render an account to a just Judge, even for an idle word, which seems to us of so little moment, what then will it be, when we shall be cited before his tribunal there to answer for acts which will have been the undeniable cause of a multitude of crimes, and of the eternal loss of a large number of souls !

Such, Beloved Brethren, are the principal evils which we conjure you, by the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to remove from amongst you, in order that, throughout all parts of this vast Province, those solid virtues may be seen to flourish, which can alone secure our happiness both here and hereafter. With these evils will also disappear the enormous expenditure they entail. How many holy and noble undertakings might be carried out, if all that is foolishly spent in taverns, at play, at the theatres, in dress, and in luxury, were devoted to them; and then, what blessings would be shed upon you, as a reward for your sacrifices in behalf of so worthy a cause! We deem it our duty to point out to you here, some of the good works it behoves you to practise, in order to arrest this torrent of iniquity, and to secure your eternal salvation.

In the first place, Beloved Brethren, take care of your poor, and the Lord, who has adopted them as his suffering members, will return you a hundredfold, for what you shall have given to relieve their sufferings. Lend your aid to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and to those pious associations of charitable ladies, who devote themselves with so much zeal, not only to the relief of the temporal wants of the poor, but above all to procuring them spiritual aid, which is a matter of still greater necessity for them.

Amongst your privileged works, beloved Brethren, do not forget St. Peter's Pence, which has for its object to enable the Holy Father to meet, in these days of affliction, the outlay necessary for the preservation of the sacred deposit of the Faith, for the government of the church, and for the relief of so many sufferings the result of political convulsions.

Give an ever increasing encouragement to the extension, in your midst, of that admirable work of the Propagation of the Faith, and bear in mind, above all, that there are in the vast territories of the North-west, of the Hudson's Bay, of Oregon, and of Vancouver, Religions of both sexes, formed amongst you, who are cultivating, at the cost of the greatest sacrifices, that most interesting portion of the field of the Father of the family.

With our prayers and with our alms, let us help them, and those other apostles of both sexes, who are labouring to extend the Kingdom of God throughout the whole world; and thus we shall have a share in the merits of their labors and of their sufferings.

In fine, Beloved Brethren, there is another work, both religious and patriotic, in which you are called upon to assist, to wit, the settlement of the wild lands, which is destined to be of an immense benefit to this country, by promoting the continued extension of catholic influence. Let us remember, Beloved Brethren, that true patriotism is inseparable from true Faith; it derives its inspiration from the heart of the God of mercies, Who, in his fatherly Provi-

dence, desires to see the whole Earth covered with inhabitants, called to bless His Holy Name, and to adore Him in spirit and in truth.

Our object, Beloved Brethren, in addressing you those recommendations in common, is to create, in all parts of our Ecclesiastical Province, a praiseworthy emulation for the maintenance of good discipline, the success of holy works inspired by Faith and Charity, and the prosperity of our noble Country.

Therefore, you will repeat with heartfelt transports of joy and happiness, the acclamations with which we have *just* caused the metropolitan Church to resound, on separating to return to our dioceses.

“To our country and to all christian people, Zeal for the Catholic Religion, justice and the abundance of peace, and victory over all the enemies of the christian Faith.”

“To the city and Province of Quebec, Tranquillity, health, and an abundance of Divine graces.” May these our ardent wishes be happily realized, under the powerful protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God,—of the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and of all the holy Patrons of this Province! *Fiat! Fiat! Amen! Amen!*

This Pastoral Letter shall be read and published, in whole, or in part only, as it *may* be deemed advisable, from the pulpit, in all the churches of the Province; and in chapter in the Religious Communities.

Given at the Archbishop's Palace, Quebec, under our signatures, and the seal of the Archdiocese, and the countersign of the Secretary to his Grace the Archbishop, the twenty first day of May one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, being the octave of the Ascension of Our Lord.



- † C. F. BISHOP OF TLOA.
- † IG. BISHOP OF MONTREAL.
- † JOS. E. BISHOP OF OTTAWA.
- † ALEX. BISHOP OF ST. BONIFACE.
- † THOMAS, BISHOP OF THREE RIVERS.
- † JOS. BISHOP OF ST. HYACINTH.
- † JOHN, BISHOP OF HAMILTON.
- † PETER, AD. BISHOP OF SANDWICH.
- † E. J. BISHOP OF KINGSTON.
- † JOHN JOS. BISHOP OF TORONTO.

By order of Their Lordships,

EDMOND LANGEVIN, Priest,
Secretary to the Archdiocese.

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